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BUREAU of MANA INVESTIGATION

ISSUE 8

VOLUME 1

Smudge 02



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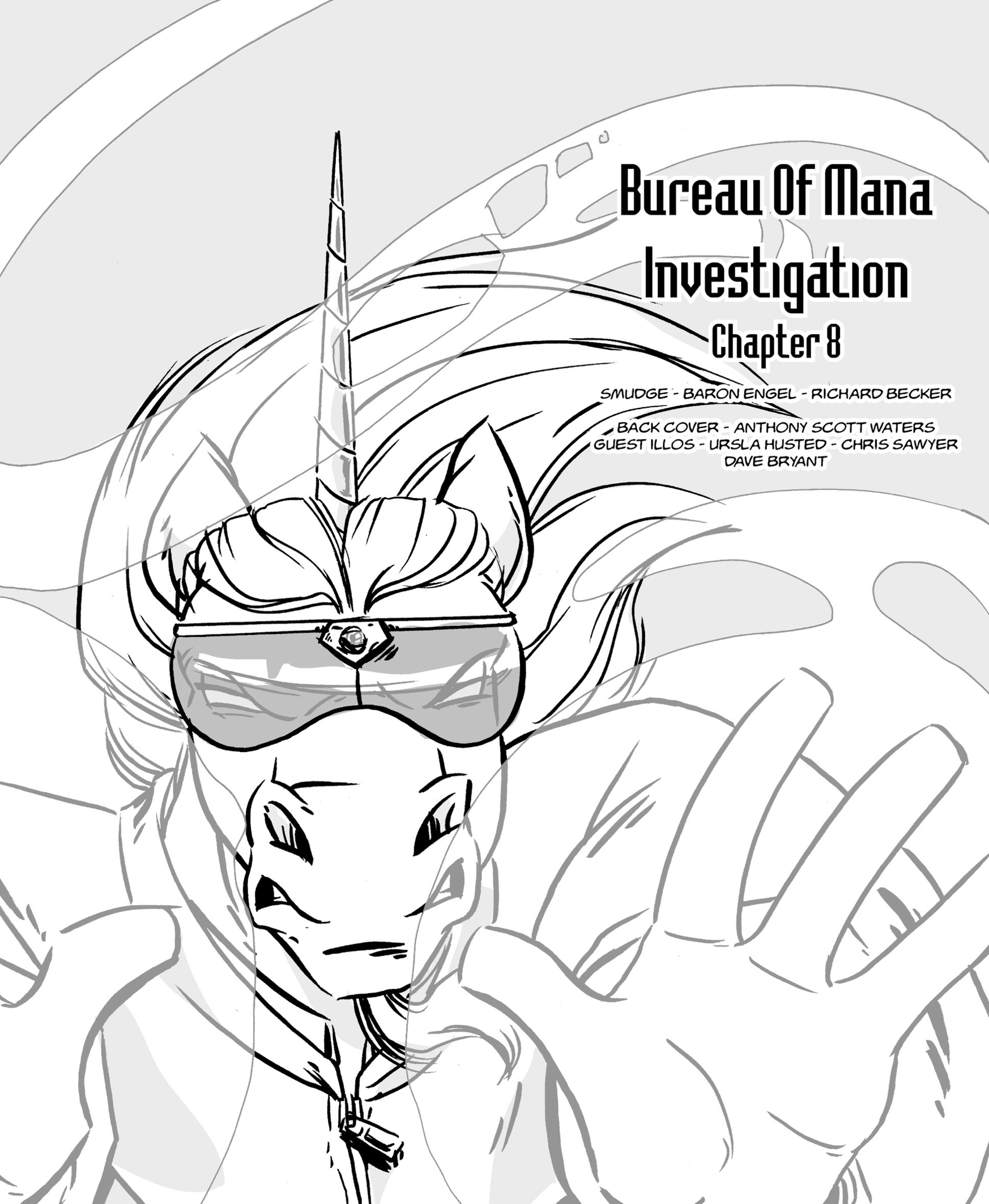
"None of the cows ate your precious family watch! I had it all along!"

Bureau Of Mana Investigation

Chapter 8

SMUDGE - BARON ENGEL - RICHARD BECKER

BACK COVER - ANTHONY SCOTT WATERS
GUEST ILLOS - URSLA HUSTED - CHRIS SAWYER
DAVE BRYANT



TA-CRACK!


〈MAYBE I CAN LOSE HIM . . .〉
〈LET ME THROUGH!〉
〈DAMN! HE'S A PERSISTENT BUGGER!〉


〈I'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE . . .〉
〈WERE IS TARLOÖM?〉
I CAN'T AFFORD TO LOSE HIM IN THIS CROWD!
WHERE THE HELL IS MY BACK-UP?!

<NEVER MIND TARLOÖM! WHO HAS A STONE HERE?!>

YOU!

ERK!

<I REMEMBER YOU! I GAVE YOU A STONE. GATE ME OUT OF HERE!>

<CAN'T! WARDS!>

<FINE! GIVE ME YOUR STONE AND I'LL FIGURE IT OUT LATER!>

<NO! DON'T!>

SHIT! I CAN'T GET THERE IN TIME LIKE THIS . . .

OH, THIS IS GOING TO SUCK!

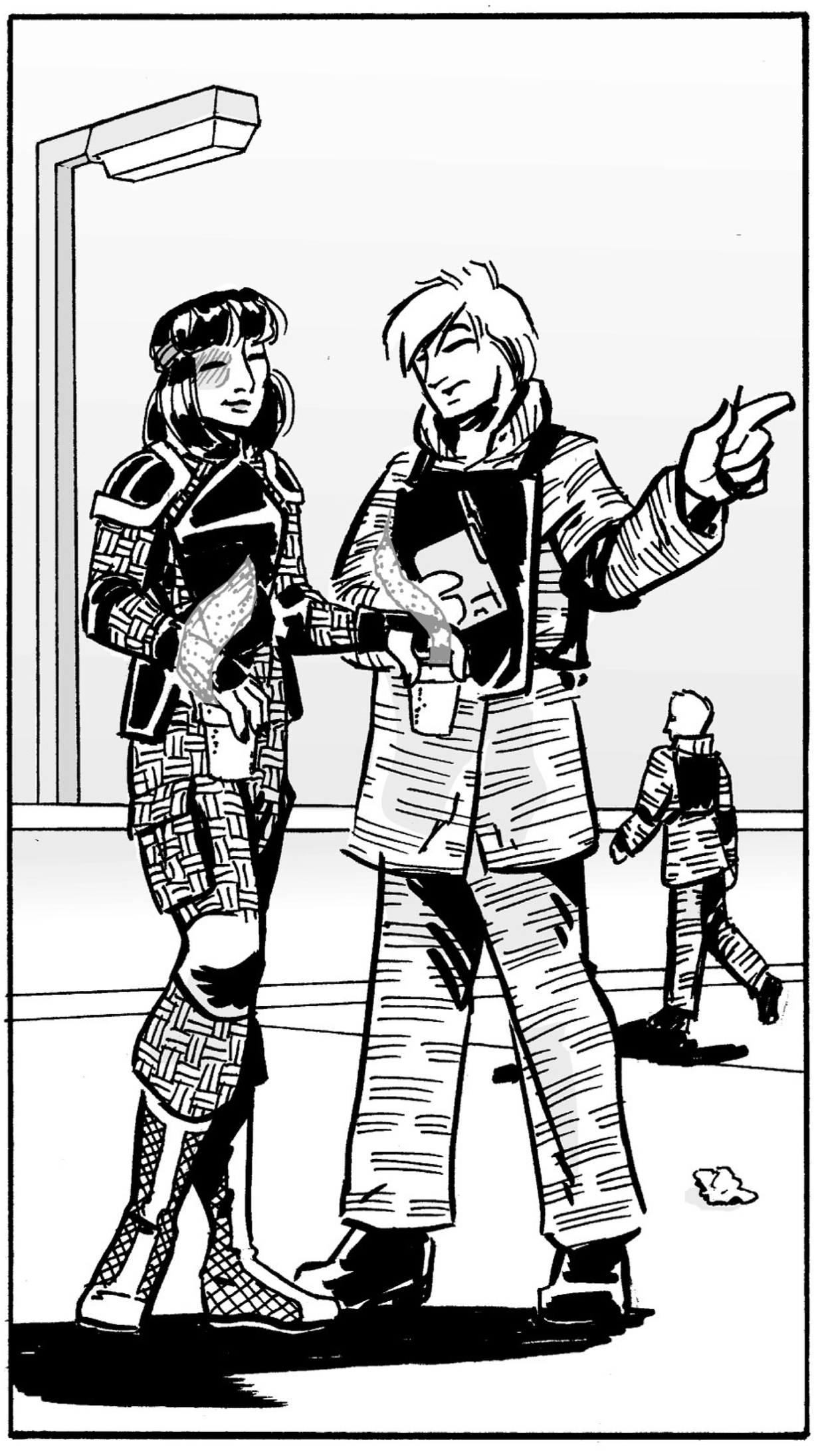


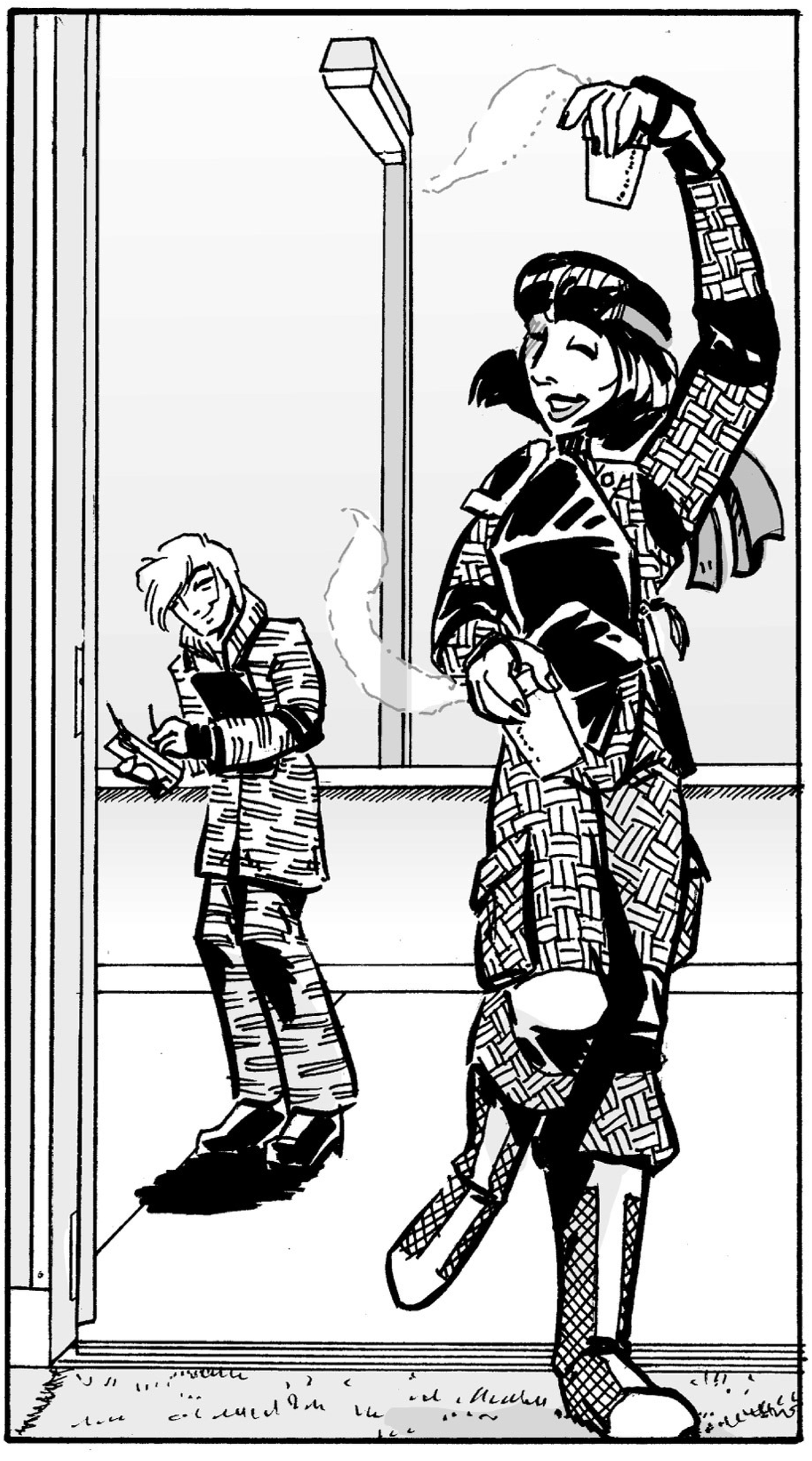
BALAM!

THUMP


STOP


DO NOT CROSS
POLICE LINE - DO NOT CROSS





AH! THERE YOU ARE!

OH, HEY, YOKO.

COFFEE?

YES! PLEASE!

HEARD YOU LOST YOUR LUNCH AGAIN.

UHM... YEAH....

AMARK, YOU'VE GOTTA STOP DOING THAT.

TRUST ME, YOKO. I WOULD LOVE NOTHING BETTER.

SO THAT'S LORD SHEILBA.

YEAH. IT WAS HIM OR THE INCUBUS.

I DON'T THINK THE COURTS ARE GOING TO GIVE YOU TROUBLE OVER IT, AMARK.

THE UBUS ON THE WAY TO THE HOSPITAL?

YEAH.

AND THE ANNOUNCER?

IN SURGERY, FROM ALL REPORTS. IT'S A WAIT-AND-SEE FOR HIM.

YOU ALL RIGHT, YOKO? YOU LOOK PRETTY BATTERED.

I'M FINE. ENDED UP HELPING THE CROWD-CONTROL BOYS.

WE GOT LUCKY. EXCEPT FOR ONE OF THE DEMON SNIPERS, AND SHIELBA HERE, THERE'S BEEN NO OTHER CASUALTIES.

DO NOT CROSS

BRUISES AND MINOR BROKEN BONES, BUT THAT'S IT.

GOOD. I'LL TAKE MY BLESSINGS WHERE I CAN GET THEM.

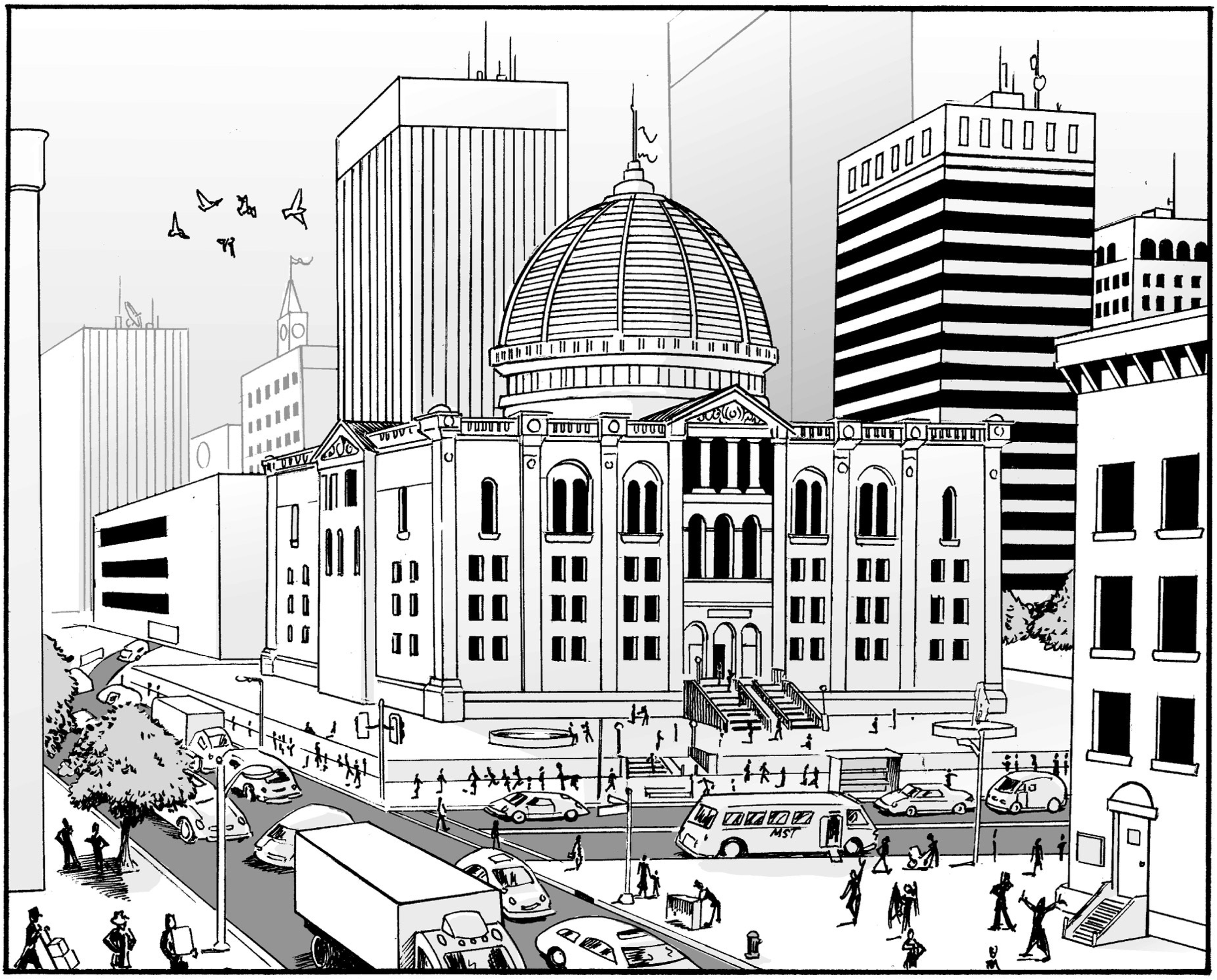
SO, I GOTTA KNOW. DURING ALL OF THIS, DID YOU AND HOLLY HAVE YOUR CHAT?

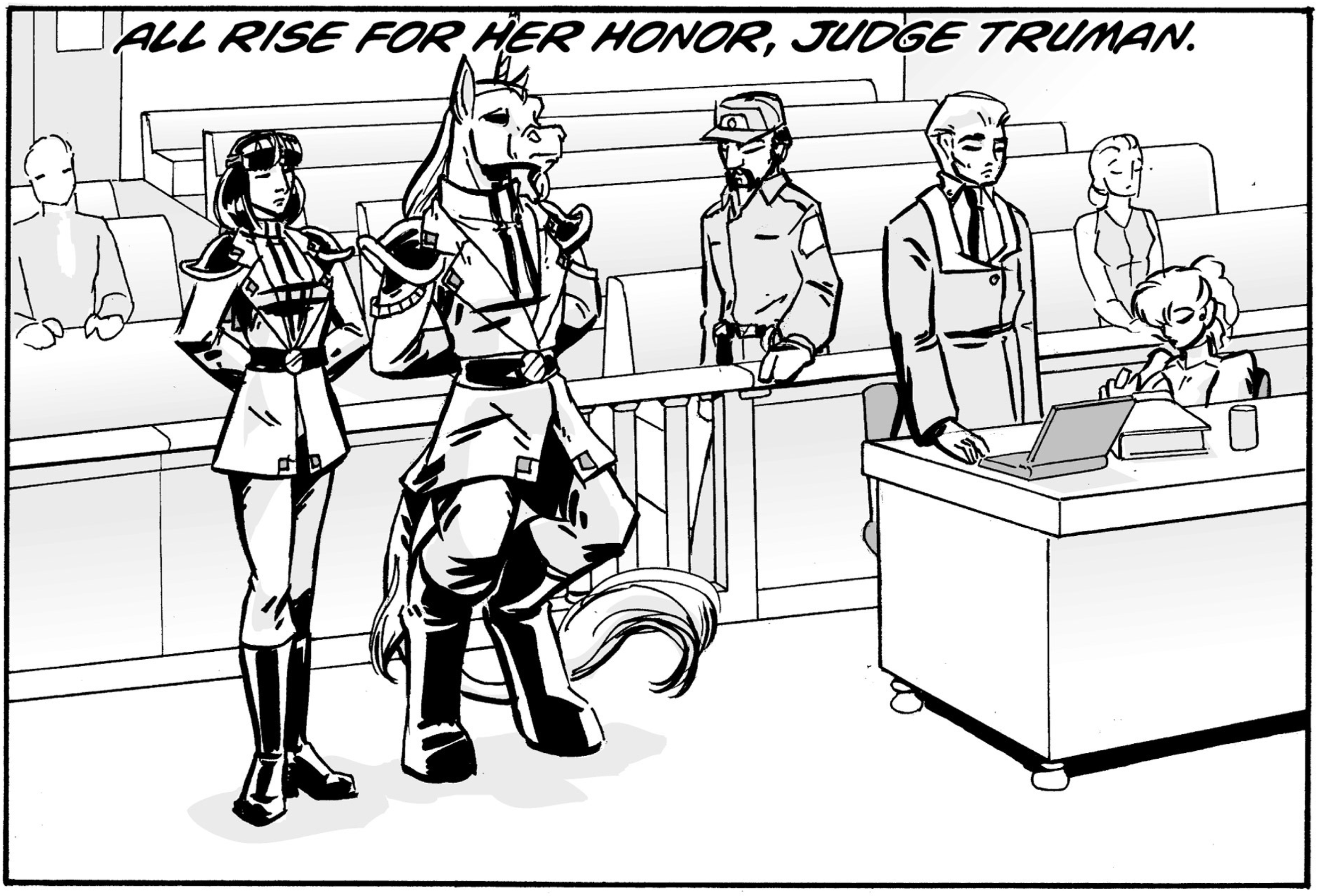
YES, WE DID.

IT WAS... QUITE INFORMATIVE.

I CURRENTLY OWE HER DINNER AT VILLA MONTAVO.

OOO -- PRICEY.


MST


ALL RISE FOR HER HONOR, JUDGE TRUMAN.

YOU MAY ALL BE SEATED.

WE RESUME THIS INQUIRY INTO THE DEATH OF LORD SHEILBA AND THE RIOT OF THE NOSFERATU CONCERT.

THIS BOARD OF INQUIRY HAS FOUND THAT SERGEANT SAKI, SERGEANT STONEBREAKER, AND LIEUTENANT BUTTERCUP ACTED WITHIN THEIR JURISDICTION IN TRYING TO KEEP THE PUBLIC PEACE.

SERGEANT SAKI AND SERGEANT STONEBREAKER ARE TO BE REINSTATED TO ACTIVE DUTY.

HOWEVER, IT HAS BEEN FOUND THAT LT. BUTTERCUP HAS NEEDLESSLY PUT THE LIFE OF A CIVILIAN IN DANGER, NAMELY MISS HOLLY ANDERS, AND THAT, WHILE HER HELP WAS GREATLY NEEDED, IT WAS NOT INDISPENSABLE.

LT. BUTTERCUP IS HEREBY SUSPENDED WITHOUT PAY FOR 30 DAYS FROM ACTIVE DUTY AS A DISCIPLINARY ACTION. THIS WILL ALSO BE PERMANENTLY NOTED IN HIS SERVICE RECORD.

CLACK

DISMISSED!

NOT INDISPENSABLE MY BUTT, AMARK!

DON'T SWEAT IT, YOKO.

LOOK BEHIND US.

HUH?

THE FUN'S JUST STARTING.

ARMY INTEL? WHAT DOES HE WANT?

ME.

I'M GOING TO BE BUGGED BY EVERY STATE OFFICIAL FROM THE MILITARY TO PUBLIC SANITATION, ASKING ME WHAT I SAW AND ENCOUNTERED IN THE DEMON LANDS.

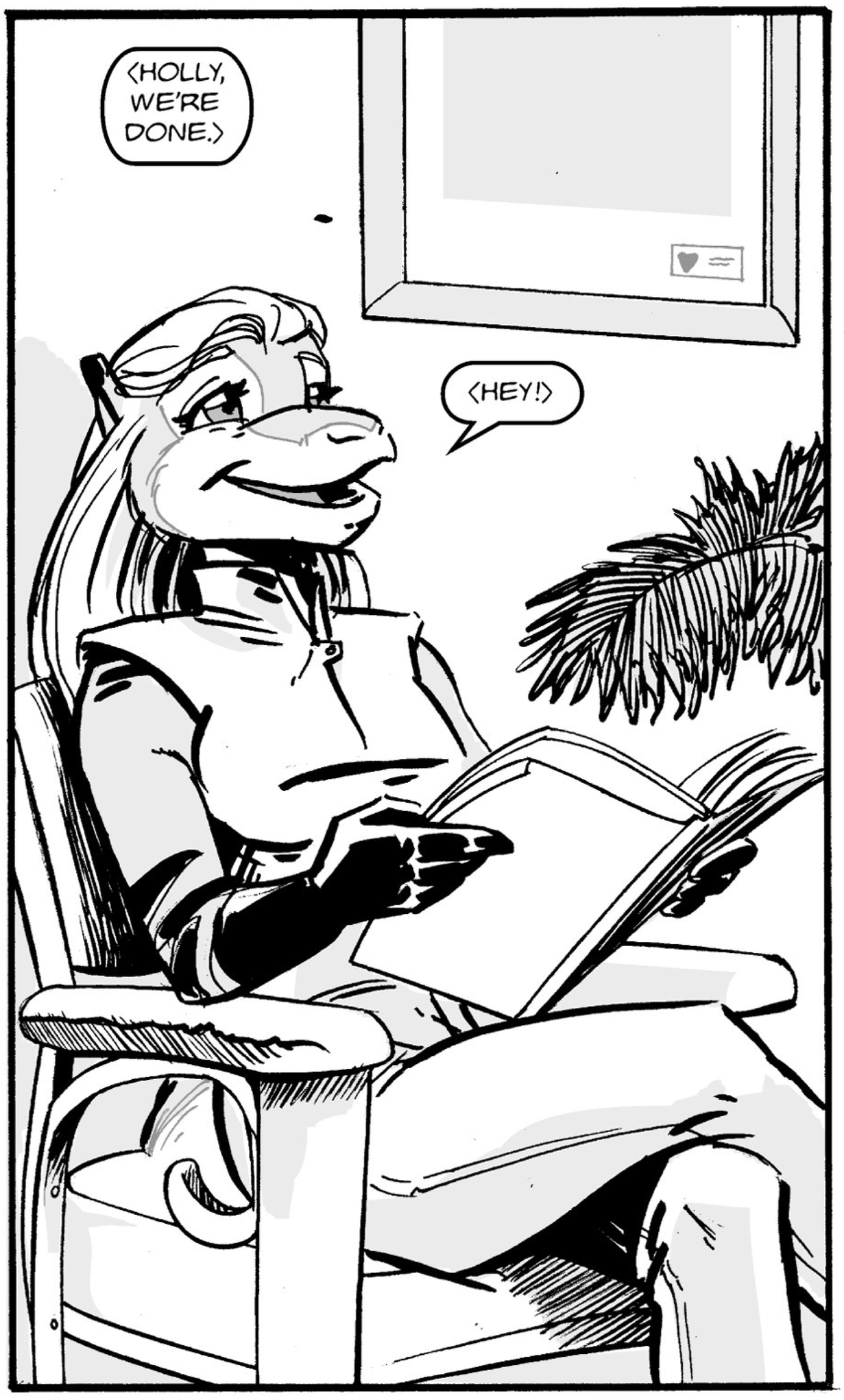
YOKO, WHY DON'T YOU GO PICK UP HYGRON AT THE HOSPITAL?

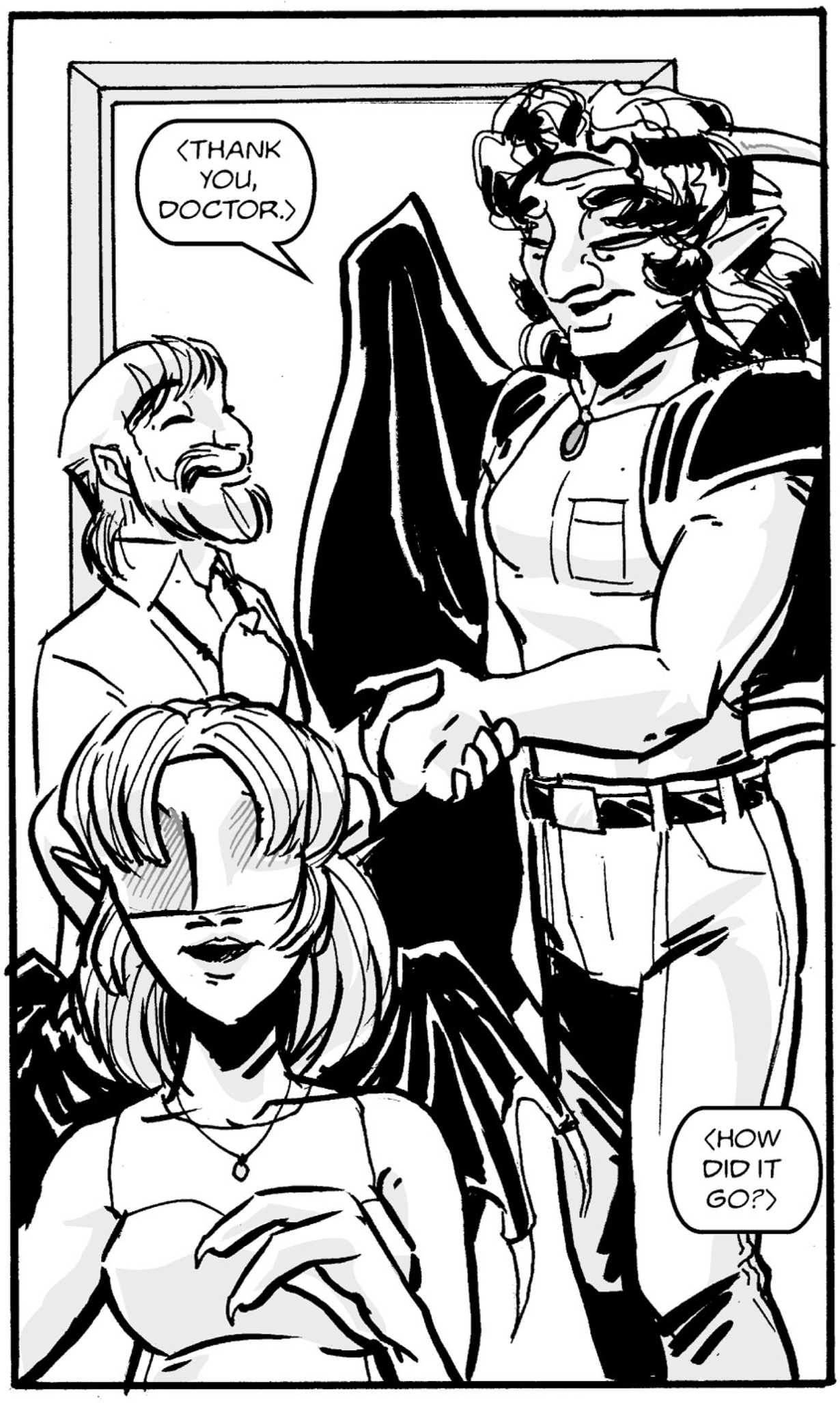
MEET ME TONIGHT AT MY PLACE. THERE'S STUFF WE ALL NEED TO TALK ABOUT.

ALL RIGHT.

LIFE'S GOING TO BE INTERESTING FOR THE NEXT FEW YEARS....



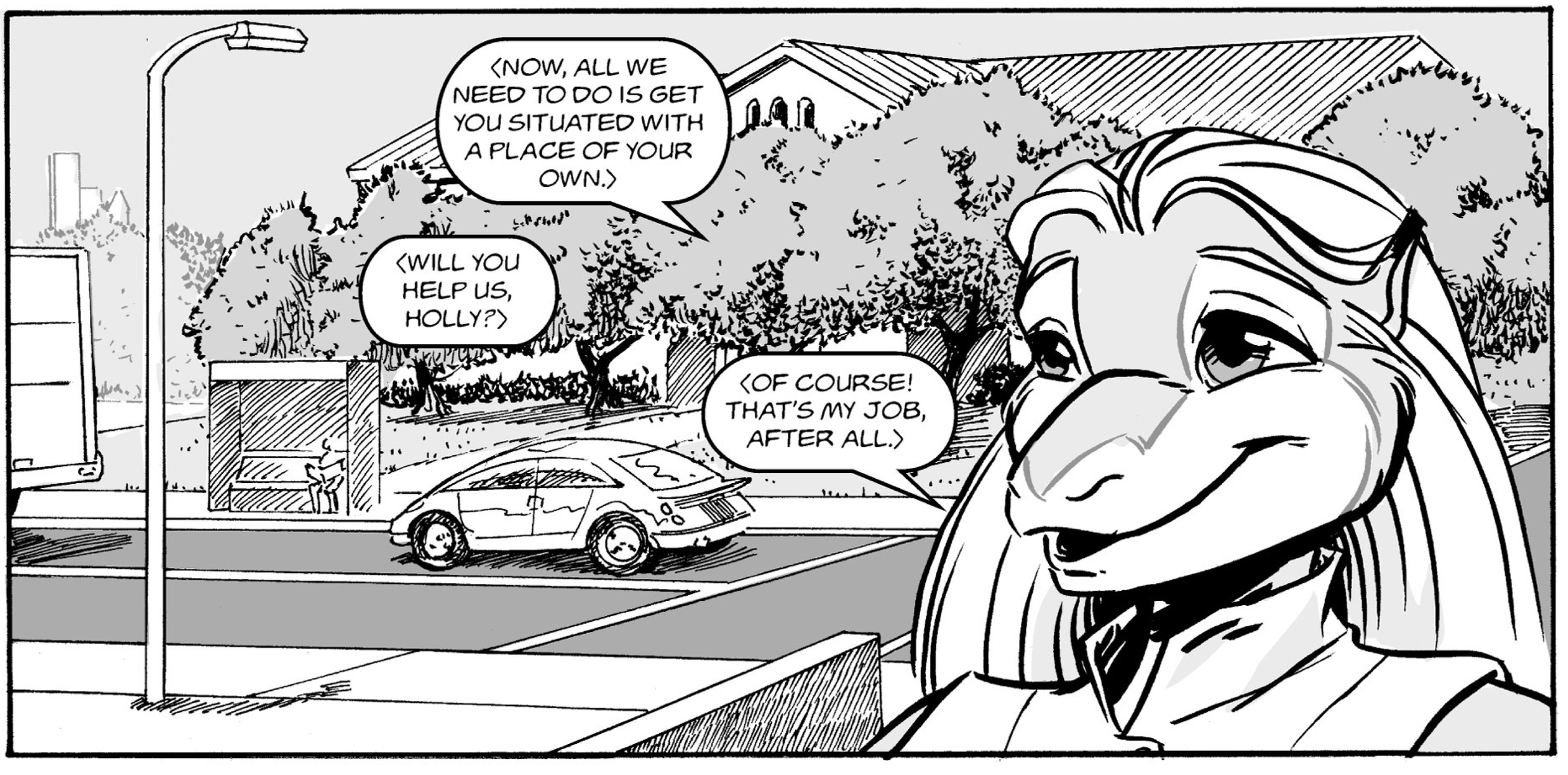

〈HOLLY, WE'RE DONE.〉
〈HEY!〉


〈THANK YOU, DOCTOR.〉
〈HOW DID IT GO?〉


〈THE DOCTOR THINKS I'LL BE ABLE TO FLY AGAIN SOON.〉
〈THANK YOU, HOLLY. I CAN'T TELL YOU HOW MUCH YOUR HELP HAS MEANT TO US.〉


〈IT'S ALL RIGHT, KÖRLORSHA.〉


〈WITH TAHEE BECOMING A STATE'S WITNESS, YOU SHOULD HAVE NO DIFFICULTIES APPLYING FOR POLITICAL ASYLUM.〉


〈NOW, ALL WE NEED TO DO IS GET YOU SITUATED WITH A PLACE OF YOUR OWN.〉
〈WILL YOU HELP US, HOLLY?〉
〈OF COURSE! THAT'S MY JOB, AFTER ALL.〉

<AND ANYWAY, YOU'RE GOING TO NEED A TRANSLATOR FOR A WHILE.>

<TRUE.>

<SO, YOU TWO HAVE BEEN HERE FOR A BIT NOW. WHAT D'YA THINK OF MEGA-SHAMMARK?>

<IT'S . . . AH . . . DIFFERENT. TO TELL THE TRUTH, I COULD NEVER HAVE IMAGINED A PLACE LIKE THIS.>

<BUT DO YOU THINK YOU'LL FIT IN HERE?>

<HOLLY, ALL POSSIBILITIES ARE OPEN TO US AND OUR CHILDREN. WE'LL DO JUST FINE.>

HEY HYGRON, HOW ARE YOU FEELING? READY TO GO HOME?

JUST LET ME FINISH THE LAST OF MY RELEASE PAPERS.

HERE. BROUGHT YOU A FEW THINGS.

AH, YOKO! MY ANGEL OF MERCY!

SHE WHO BRINGS ME *PANTS!*

GET WELL JARHEAD!

SO HOW'D THE BOARD OF INQUIRY GO?

EXIT

LOUSY. AMARK'S BEEN SUSPENDED FOR THIRTY DAYS.

A2

OUCH! AND I'M ON MEDICAL FOR ANOTHER TWO MONTHS AT LEAST.

AT LEAST THE DOCS DIDN'T REPLACE ANYTHING THIS TIME AROUND.

COGGS, ERMIN AND I CAN HANDLE IT. IT'S NOT LIKE THIS HASN'T HAPPENED BEFORE.

I KNOW. BUT IT'S STILL NOT PLEASANT.

ANY WAY, I'M HOPING THINGS WILL QUIET DOWN FOR A WHILE NOW THAT LORD SHEILBA'S GONE.

I WOULDN'T HOLD YOUR BREATH, YOKO. JUST BECAUSE YOU TOOK OUT THE DON, DOESN'T MEAN THE SYNDICATES GONE.

YEAH, I KNOW. AMARK KNOWS IT TOO. THAT'S WHY HE WANTS TO MEET US FOR DINNER TONIGHT.

WHO'S COOK'N?

I THINK HOLLY IS.

YUP, HE'S BETTER!

HOT DANG!

HOPE SHE MADE THOSE NEAT FRITTER THINGIE'S AGAIN!

?

BEEP-
BEEP

WOW! NICE CAR!

THANKS. IT'S FOR SALE, IF YOU'RE INTERESTED.

YOU'RE KIDDING, RIGHT?

WAIT! LET ME GUESS... HOLLY CAN'T STAND YOU DRIVING AROUND IN A COMPLETE CHICK MAGNET LIKE THAT.

NO, =SNICKER=, SHE JUST THINKS I HAVE TOO MANY OF THEM....

MIND IF I SMOKE?

NO, GO RIGHT AHEAD.

YOU KNOW, SHARRDAN, YOU'RE AN AWFUL HARD MAN TO GET A HOLD OF.

SORRY, WE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE BEST TO LAY LOW FOR A BIT. SO WHY DID YOU CALL ME OUT HERE?

YOU'RE . . . GOING TO CONTINUE WITH YOUR UNDERGROUND, AREN'T YOU?

WHAT MAKES YOU THINK I WON'T?

JUST BECAUSE MY DAD'S GONE DOESN'T MEAN ANYTHING'S CHANGED BACK IN THE DEMON LANDS.

HECK! I HATE TO THINK ABOUT WHO'D BE IN CHARGE NOW.

UNTIL THINGS CAN CHANGE, AT LEAST I CAN GIVE THOSE WHO WANT OUT A WAY OUT. . . .

AND IN DOING SO, YOU REALIZE YOU'RE GOING TO BE CAUSING A LOT OF TENSION IN THIS AREA?

BOTH OUR PEOPLES ARE GOING TO BRING SOME RATHER NASTY PRE-CONCEIVED CULTURAL EXPECTATIONS TO THE TABLE.

IF WE' AREN'T CAREFUL, IT'LL GET QUITE UGLY.

IF YOU'RE ASKING ME TO STOP BECAUSE YOU SEE ME TOO MUCH AS A PROBLEM, YOU CAN JUST FORGET IT!

FORGIVE ME, SHARRDAN. YOU SEEM TO HAVE MISREAD MY INTENTIONS.

I DON'T SEE YOU AS A PROBLEM...

I SEE YOU AS PART OF THE SOLUTION.

SGT. SAKI, SGT. STONEBREAKER AND I ARE MEETING IN A FEW HOURS OVER AT MY PLACE.

WE'RE HOPING TO KNOCK HEADS TO COME UP WITH A DEPARTMENT POLICY DEALING WITH YOUR PEOPLE WHO ARE IMMIGRATING HERE, UNTIL THE LAW-MAKERS CAN COME UP WITH SOME THEMSELVES.

AND... I'D LIKE YOUR INPUT ON THE MATTER.

AFTER ALL, YOU KNOW YOUR PEOPLE FAR BETTER THAN I EVER COULD.

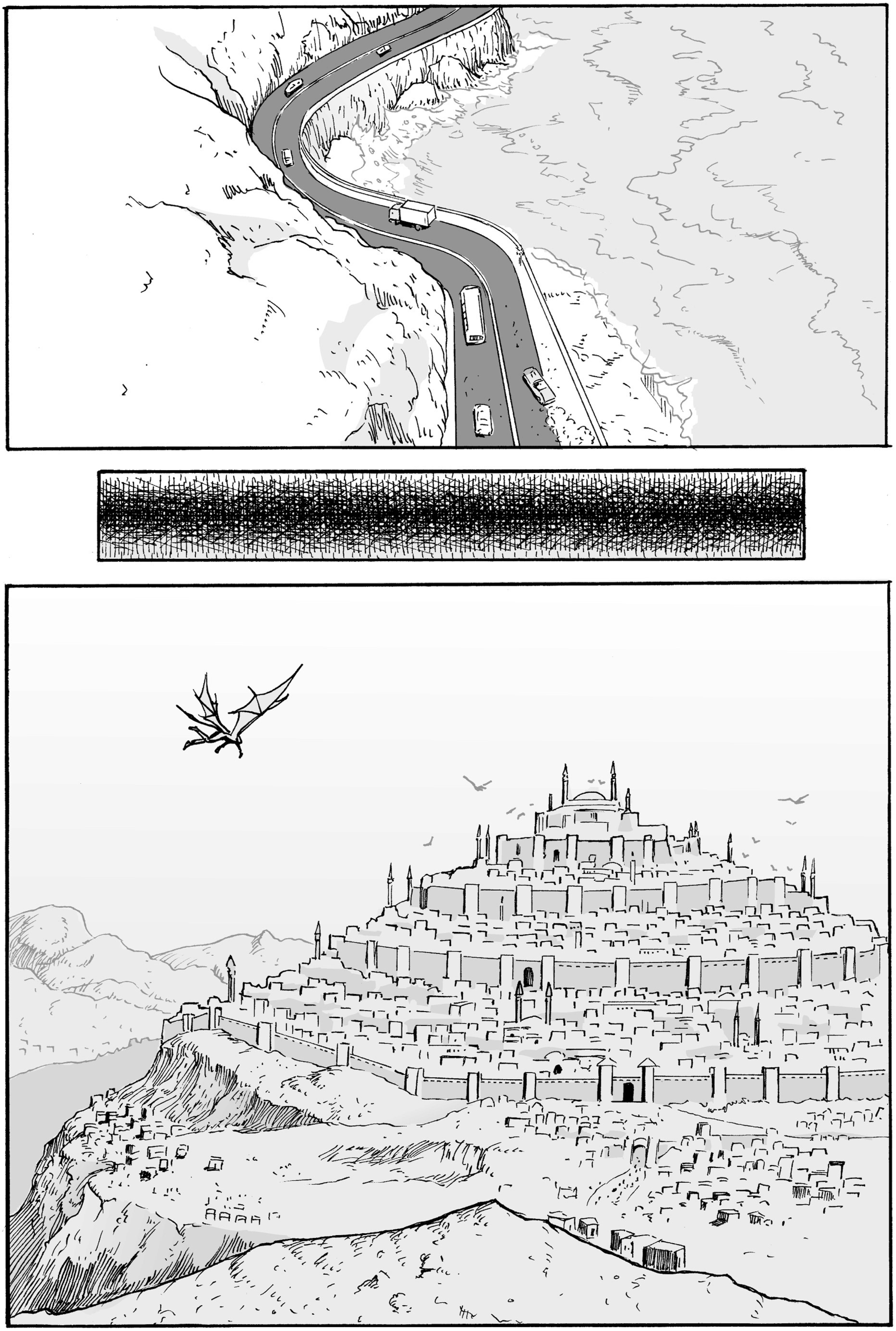
AW, GEE, AMARK,

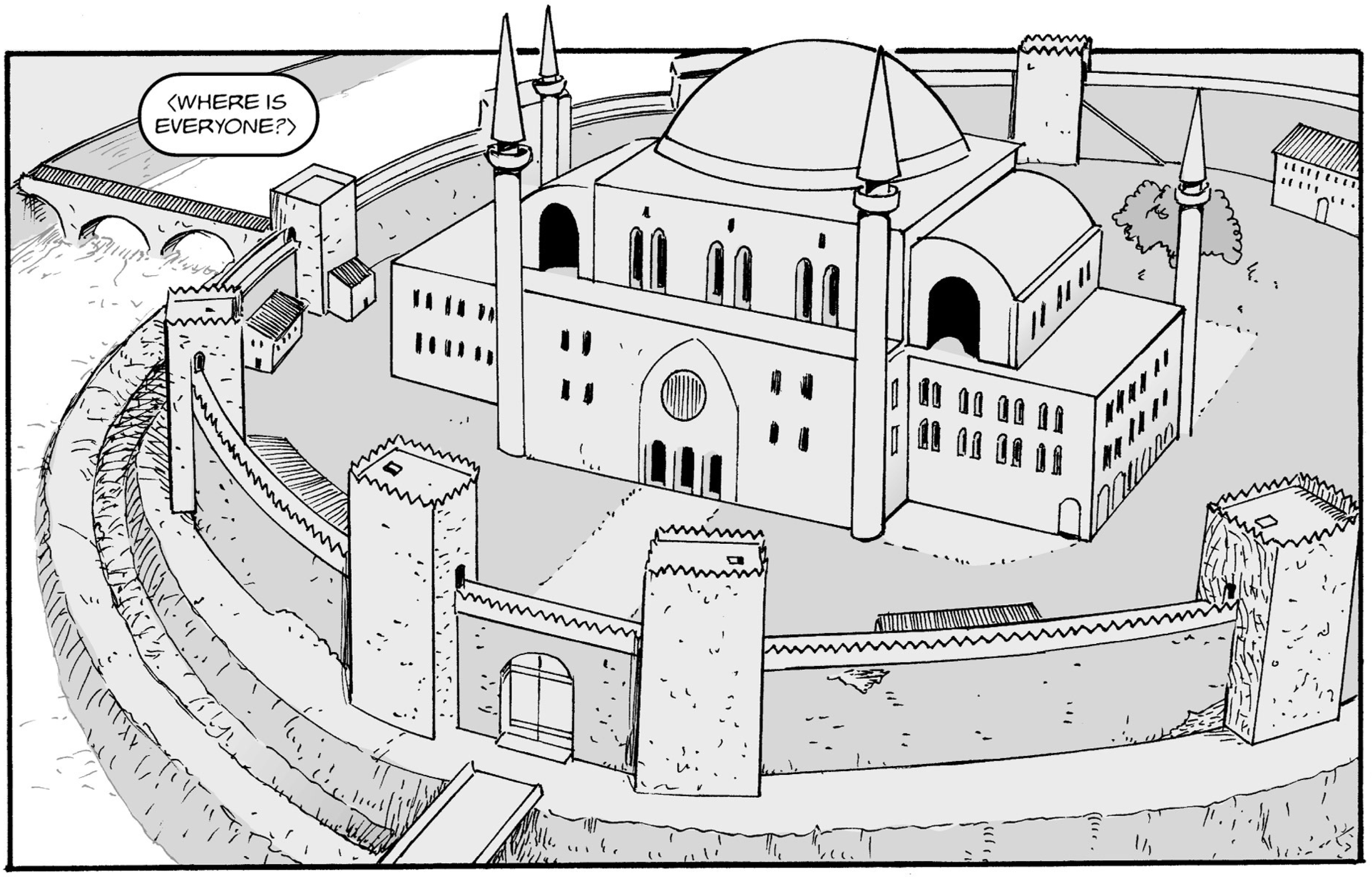
AND HERE I THOUGHT YOU WANTED MY OPINION ON HOW TO END THE WORLD!

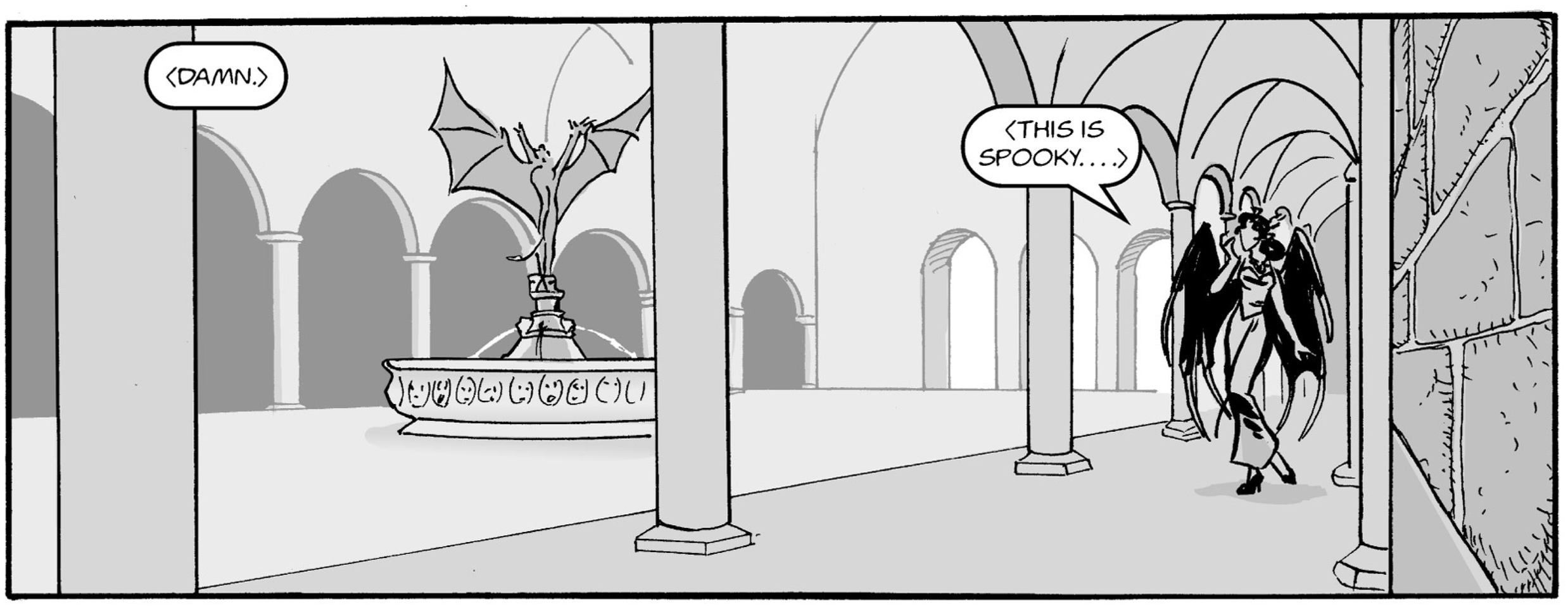
HAR, HAR, HAR. JUST GET IN THE CAR, FUNNY-BOY.

CAN I DRIVE?

NOT ON YOUR LIFE!




〈WHERE IS EVERYONE?〉


〈DAMN.〉
〈THIS IS SPOOKY....〉


〈DID THE NEW LORD FIRE THE ENTIRE PALACE?〉


〈IF THAT'S TRUE, I BETTER SWEAR MY LOYALTY AND QUICK OR I MIGHT BE THE NEXT ONE AXED.〉


(HELLO?)
(IS ANYBODY HERE?)


(NO NEED TO YELL, CHILD.)
(AFTER ALL . . .)


(THINGS ARE JUST AS THEY SHOULD BE. . . .)

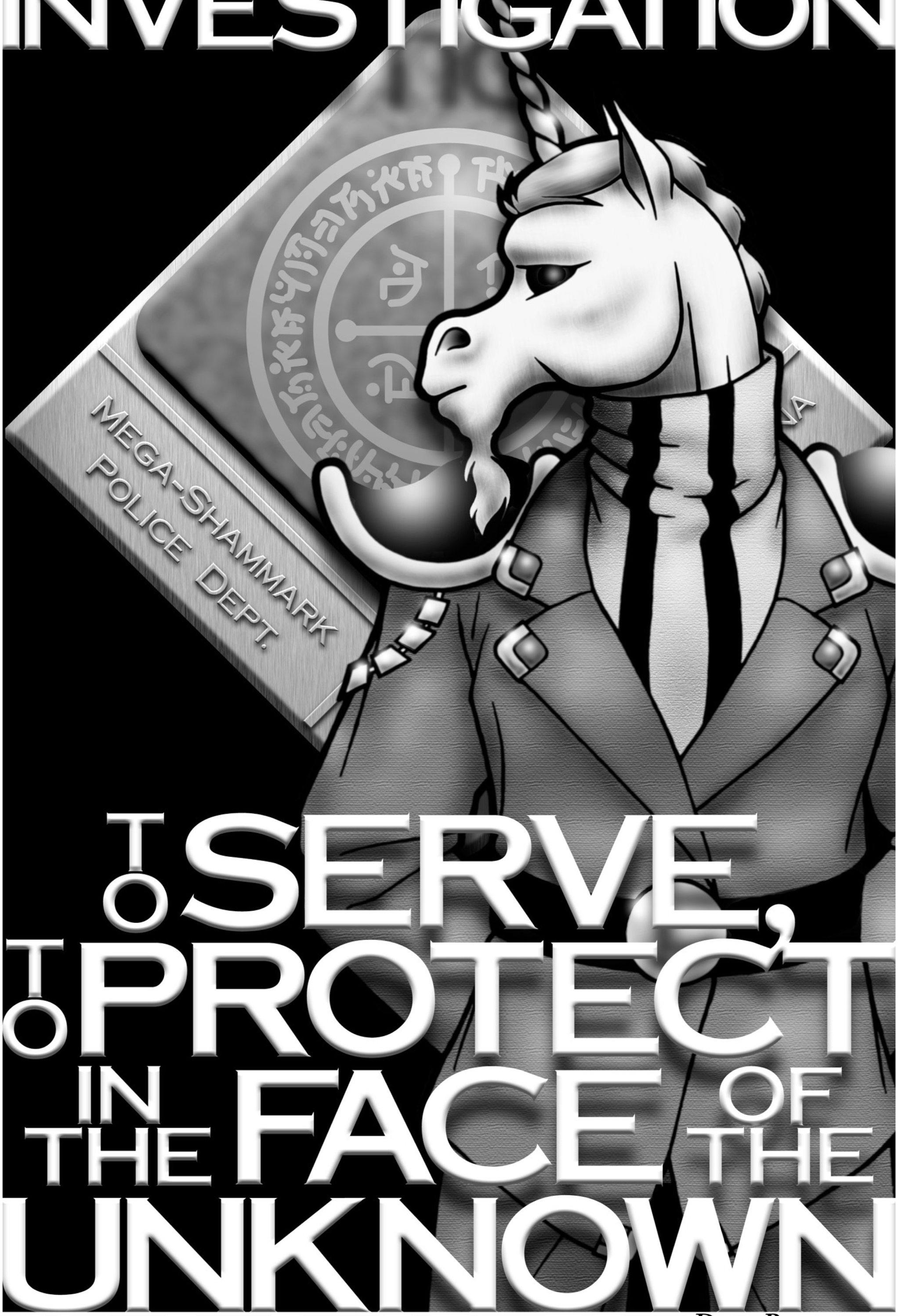
End.


URSULA '02



Chris Sawyer

BUREAU OF MANA INVESTIGATION



TO SERVE, TO PROTECT IN THE FACE OF THE UNKNOWN

Dave Bryant 2003


ASW 03